REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-9 are now pending in this application.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sheldon et al (U.S. Patent 5,765,143) (hereinafter Sheldon) or Caveney et al (U.S. Patent 5,608,621) (hereinafter Caveney).

With respect to claims 1-8, as amended, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a product repairing method comprising the steps of:

"receiving a request from a user for repairing a product;

selling a replacement part to said user in response to the request, provided that the replacement part necessary for said requested repair is in stock;

retrieving repair subscribers having said replacement part by means of a computer storing a subscribers data base accumulating information on a plurality of repair subscribers, and procuring said replacement part from a repair subscriber that is one of the repair subscribers having said replacement part, provided that said replacement part necessary for the requested repair is not in stock; and

repairing said product by using said replacement part."

(Underlines added for emphasis)

The product repairing method including the above-quoted steps allows for the selling of a replacement part to a user if the part is in stock and for the procuring of the replacement part from a repair subscriber if the part is not in stock. Such a repairing method allows a manufacturer to supply users with replacement parts for a prolonged period of time without incurring problems that can arise from holding replacement parts for a long time. For example, a manufacturer could procure a part from a repair subscriber that is required to repair a product for a user where the compulsory storage period of replacement parts for the product has expired. Thus, the present method allows a manufacturer to reduce its inventory

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of replacement parts while still maintaining the ability to repair previously manufactured products. Advantages such as those described above are discussed in the specification (e.g. page 2, lines 20-26; page 3, lines 11-17).

Sheldon neither discloses nor suggests the product repairing method with the above-quoted steps including <u>retrieving repair subscribers</u> having a replacement part by means of a computer that stores a data base that accumulates information on a <u>plurality</u> of repair subscribers. In Sheldon, a number of programmed computers operating at a first vertical level (e.g. retail store) of a part distribution chain are connected to a programmed computer at a second vertical level (e.g. manufacturer) of a part distribution chain (see Sheldon Figure 2, reference numbers 1, 2, n; column 5, lines 15-31). The retail store computers in Sheldon submit inventory increase transactions to the <u>manufacturer</u> and the manufacturer sells the parts to the retail stores (see Sheldon column 6, lines 24-33; column 7, lines 54-62). The retail stores only submit requests to the manufacturer for parts and are <u>limited</u> by the parts in the warehouse of the manufacturer (see Sheldon column 1, lines 48-55). Since the retail stores <u>only</u> submit orders to the manufacturer, they do not retrieve repair subscribers having a replacement part by means of a computer that stores a data base that accumulates information on a <u>plurality</u> of repair subscribers.

Similarly, Caveney neither discloses nor suggests the product repairing method with the above-quoted steps including <u>retrieving repair subscribers</u> having a replacement part by means of a computer that stores a data base that accumulates information on a <u>plurality</u> of repair subscribers. In Caveney, a customer places an order for one or more parts in an inventory and the inventory is supplied with parts from a <u>supply source</u> (see Caveney Figure 2, reference numbers 200, 204, 214; column 5, lines 22-46). The inventory is <u>limited</u> by the parts in the supply source. Since the inventory is <u>only</u> supplied from the supply source, the inventory does not retrieve repair subscribers having a replacement part by means of a computer that stores a data base that accumulates information on a <u>plurality</u> of repair subscribers.

Therefore, independent claim 1, as amended, is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited prior art and, hence, is believed to be allowable.

Independent claim 7 recites a product repairing apparatus with operation similar to the product repairing method of claim 1. Therefore, claim 7 is believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

All dependent claims are believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend.

The application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date October 3, 2003

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